

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A method for determining the presence of bacteria in a platelet or red blood cell containing sample is disclosed. The method of the present invention includes the steps of: lysing a substantial portion of the platelets or red blood cells; staining the bacteria using a membrane permeable nucleic acid stain; filtering the sample using a membrane filter with a suitable pore size so that a material containing the stained bacteria is retained on the membrane filter; and
10 analyzing the material retained on the membrane filter using epifluorescence microscopy and/or digital image acquisition and analysis to determine the presence of bacteria in the sample.

15 The method of the present invention allows the detection of bacterial contamination in platelets or red blood cells at clinically significant levels in a relatively short period of time.